

# Washington State Patrol Media Release

**Chief John R. Batiste**

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**\*\*\*For Immediate Release\*\*\***

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## **WSP to enforce new "texting while driving" law starting Jan. 1**

(Olympia)—The Washington State Patrol plans to vigorously enforce the state's new law against sending text messages while driving, once that law takes effect on Jan. 1.

"Texting while driving was always a bad idea," said WSP Chief John R. Batiste. "Things happen too fast on the highway to take your eyes off the road long enough to read or type a message."

Because texting while driving is a secondary violation, troopers cannot stop drivers if they see it occurring. But it could mean drivers end up with two tickets instead of just one.

"When we see other driving errors, such as weaving or unsafe lane changes, we will not hesitate to write a second citation under the texting law if that contributed to the first violation," Batiste said.

If a text message or cell phone call requires immediate attention, you should pull safely off the road. Handle the matter, and then get back on the road when you can give driving your full attention.

Parents should talk to teenage drivers, and let them know the hazards involved.

"There is no driver on the road skilled enough to drive and text at the same time," Batiste noted. "Especially not a teenager with only a year or two of driving experience."

It's also time to start shopping for a hands-free device to use when talking on a cellular phone. The law requiring hands free devices goes into effect on July 1, and will be enforced with similar vigor.

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